



HCHC RFP No. 02-06-2016
Request for Proposals for Logo and Website Design Services

Questions and Answers

1. Does the Howard County Housing Commission (the “Commission”) have an existing tagline that needs to be incorporated in the logo?
 - A. No, and please note that actual logo designs for the Commission are not requested to be submitted with proposals. But for reference, the Commission’s mission statement is:

Howard County Housing’s mission is to provide safe, quality, affordable, and sustainable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families who live or work in Howard County and to assist them in moving toward economic independence. Howard County Housing will pursue this mission through open, efficient, innovative, and accountable processes.
2. Does the Commission wish to use the seal of Howard County in the logo?
 - A. No, quite the opposite. There is a common misconception that the Commission is nested within the Howard County Government. The Commission and the County are two different legal entities. Thus, the Commission does not wish to create a logo that perpetuates the misconception.
3. What is the timeline for the project?
 - A. That is for the vendor to propose (see Document B, Item 5 in the RFP). The Commission would like to have this project completed by the end of 2016 but, ideally, well before that.
4. In what type of programming language should the website be written?

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- A. That is for the vendor to propose. Generally, the programming language should be one that is commonly used so future additions to the website may be completed with ease.
5. Will a CMS interface be required? Does the Commission have a specific preference for CMS? Will the vendor be required to provide CMS training?
- A. Yes, CMS will be required. The specific software will be for the vendor to propose. Generally, the CMS interface should be user-friendly for users with varying levels of experience. Yes, the vendor will be expected to provide CMS training to designated Commission staff.
6. Does the Commission's current website have existing forms or CRM that will be carried over to the new website?
- A. No. The Commission's website is informational and educational.
7. Who will be hosting the website?
- A. A host has not been selected yet. That will be for the vendor to propose. A vendor may offer to host the website but is not required to do so.
8. Must the website be available in multiple languages? If so, will the Commission provide the non-English text?
- A. Yes, the website must be available in multiple languages. In addition to English, a user should have the option to view the website in three languages – Chinese (Mandarin dialect), Korean, and Spanish. The Commission prefers to have this capacity on the website at launch. If necessary, the Commission will provide the non-English text, but vendors should include in proposals their capacity to convert the language in lieu of the Commission providing it.
9. Should the vendor's certificate of insurance include errors and omissions coverage? If so, at what minimum limit?
- A. Yes. One hundred thousand dollars.
10. Must a style guide for the website be provided by the vendor?
- A. Yes.
11. Does the Commission anticipate any payment gateways or e-commerce?

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A. No.

12. Should the vendor propose services for setting up e-mail accounts using the Commission's new web domain?

A. No.

13. Is there a set budget for this project?

A. No.

14. What are the evaluation criteria for proposals?

A. See Section 9 of the RFP.

15. Will the vendor be required to produce photographs for the website?

A. No.

16. Will a "calendar of events" feature be needed on the website?

A. Yes.

17. Will social media integration be required for the website?

A. Not at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

18. Are there any "must-haves" for the website?

A. See responses to specific questions about the website's content and the example URLs provided in Question 139.

19. Will there be any private content on the website that requires a login to access?

A. There is none on the Commission's current website and none will be required at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

20. Will vendor be responsible for obtaining copyrights and trademarks?

A. No, the vendor will not be required to obtain these rights or provide advice on obtaining them. The vendor, however, must provide a deliverable that includes the descriptive contents necessary for the filing for such rights.

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21. Must proposals include options for SEO?

A. No.

22. Should a mobile version of the website be made available?

A. Yes.

23. On the current website, a PDF listing of apartments for rent is available. Will the vendor be required to create a dynamic, searchable listing of apartments?

A. No.

24. Will any web analytics be required?

A. No.

25. Will the vendor be required to develop only one preliminary design for the website? How many “revision rounds” will there be?

A. The process of “preliminary-to-final” design is for the vendor to propose. The Commission does not have a minimum or maximum number requirement for preliminary designs. An exact number of “revision rounds” is undetermined, but the Commission seeks a vendor that will be reasonably flexible in revising the design as per the Commission’s comments.

26. For the logo, will the Commission require multiple preliminary designs? How many “revision rounds” will there be?

A. Yes, the vendor should be prepared to develop at least three preliminary designs. See Question 25 regarding “revision rounds.”

27. When would the Commission like to launch the website?

A. The Commission would like to launch quickly but by no later than the end of 2016.

28. Does the Commission have a storage size requirement for the website?

A. Not at this time. For guidance, the vast majority of files that the Commission uploads to its current website are documents and photographs. Vendors are

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encouraged to visit the Commission's existing website (linked in Section 1 of the RFP) to evaluate storage needs.

29. Will the vendor be required to design a letterhead for the Commission?

A. No.

30. Will the vendor be required to attend in-person meetings?

A. The vendor must be available for an in-person kick-off meeting. The Commission anticipates that the bulk of discussions regarding this project can be conducted over the phone, but prefers that the vendor be reasonably available if and when the need for an in-person meeting arises.

31. In Document B, Item 4e of the RFP, "completed product now online" is requested. Should URLs to the products be provided?

A. Yes.

32. Will the vendor be required to create infographics for the website?

A. No.

33. Is a blog required for the website?

A. No.

34. We would like to confirm that there is no requirement for an online application at this time; however, the site must support possible future integration of an online application?

A. That is correct.

35. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this (like, from India or Canada)?

A. Yes. See Section 5 of the RFP for eligibility requirements.

36. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

A. Yes. See Question 30.

37. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA (like, from India or Canada)?

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- A. Yes, the Commission does not have a locational requirement for where the technical work (i.e., logo and website development) is performed.

38. Can we submit the proposals via email?

- A. See Section 8 of the RFP for proposal submission requirements.

39. Can it be assumed that successful delivery will include all supporting files necessary for a fully functioning, forward-compatible site? (web page source files, stylesheets, supporting graphic imagery, and other UI level scripting)?

- A. Yes.

40. Will there be a web-based content management system required and, if so, does the agency have personnel to communicate with on agency-specific technical questions?

- A. Yes, see Question 5. Commission personnel will be designated to communicate with the vendor after award is made.

41. Is there a pre-determined hosting location and setup?

- A. No, see Question 7.

42. Is there an incumbent contractor?

- A. No.

43. Assuming you have a budget set aside for this project, are you able to share how much is budgeted for the website?

- A. See Question 13.

44. On page 2 under General: it states that we would transfer control for ongoing maintenance and updating. To clarify: You're just talking about the ability to add and remove content and general update to the site correct? Are you looking for the selected vendor to host this as well?

- A. Correct. See Question 7 regarding hosting.

45. On page 6 under Evaluation of Proposals: Out of the evaluation criteria which is the most important?

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- A. The criteria are ranked in order, starting with the highest importance.
46. On page 6 under Evaluation of Proposals: Could you also explain further the process you will use to determine the best experience, capacity, technical experience and completeness of the proposal?
- A. The Commission will form a committee to evaluate proposals against the criteria provided and determine the awardee.
47. If I have further questions based on your answers, will there be an opportunity for follow-up questions?
- A. No.
48. What is the relationship between the Commission and Howard County Housing (<http://www.howardcountyhousing.com>)?
- A. “Howard County Housing” is an umbrella term used for the Commission and the Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development. The above URL was established to promote a housing fair and expo sponsored by both entities and does not have any bearing on this project.
49. Does the Commission have preference for a content management system?
- A. See Question 5.
50. Is the development of a tagline part of the Logo project?
- A. No.
51. Is the contractor responsible for writing and/or editing content for the website?
- A. No.
52. Does the Commission have budget or ceiling amount for this project?
- A. No.
53. Who will be the assigned Project Manager from HCHC, this person will be the point person for HCHC. They will serve as the vendors direct point of contact, and will funnel all questions from the HCHC Team to our inhouse Project Manager. Thus we have one point of contact that will give approval throughout the project process? Will the Point of

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Contact have the proper authority within the scope of the project to give approval throughout the various stages of the project? Or will approval be given by the Howard County Housing Board?

A. The Commission will designate after award is made. Yes, the designee will have proper approval authority.

54. Outside of the HCHC what other Howard County departments will the awarded Vendor work with?

A. None. This RFP pertains only to the Commission.

55. Our company is currently going through the process of verifying that it is Minority owned. Will the HCHC be willing to work with an vendor that is currently in the process of receiving their Minority Owned, Small Business Certification?

A. Yes.

56. Does the HCHC prefer to work with HubZone qualified vendors?

A. The Commission does not have a specific preference for this.

57. How many departments need to give approval in order to move forward with the various phases of the project?

A. None. This RFP pertains only to the Commission.

58. What are your current issues within the current HCHC logo and website?

A. The Commission does not have a current logo. The key issues with the current website are that it is nested within the website of another entity - Howard County Government - and the Commission generally seeks to update its website so it is more presentable and easily-navigable.

59. Is there a current incumbent in place?

A. No.

60. What is the biggest complaint that users (audience) currently have?

A. Finding specific information can sometimes be hard.

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61. What is the biggest setback or pain point currently within HCHC? (This can be system or non system related)?

A. See Question 60. As it pertains to the website, a challenge is finding the most effective way to utilize it as a means of reaching the Commission's objectives.

62. How many staff personnel are available from HCHC during the project process?

A. That will be determined after award is made. The vendor should anticipate 1 to 3 staff members.

63. Does the HCHC have an approved budget for the logo and website project?

A. There is no specific budget.

64. Does the HCHC have a desired Information Architecture (Site Map) developed?

A. No. The Commission anticipates working with the vendor to develop this.

65. Does the HCHC currently have a photographer on hand to assist with taking photos for the HCHC website?

A. No.

66. Will the vendor need to provide a photographer to take new photos to be used throughout the website?

A. No, the Commission will arrange for photographs as needed.

67. What is Howard County Housing Commission's current experience working with Section 508 Compliancy?

A. The Commission does not have such experience.

68. Do you plan on using videos throughout the website?

A. Not at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

69. If video assistance is needed are you open to the vendor creating custom video content for your website?

A. No, the Commission does not anticipate any such need.

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70. Is there a limit to the size of documents that can be loaded to the site?

A. No.

71. Does Howard County Housing currently have a brand/Style Guide that must be followed by the HCHC?

A. No.

72. What font is currently used on the current Howard County Housing logo?

A. The Howard County Housing logo that is used at the top of this document and on the cover page of the RFP is an image, not text. The Commission does not have record of the font utilized. That logo will not have any bearing on the design of the Commission's future logo.

73. Does the Howard County Housing Commission, currently have any symbols, emblems, icons, or images it wants to display in the design of the logo?

A. No. The Commission anticipates working with the vendor to develop this.

74. Is there a desired color scheme?

A. No. The Commission anticipates working with the vendor to develop this.

75. What is the vision of HCHC? What is the Mission of the HCHC?

A. See Question 1.

76. Will the vendor be expected to assist with the trademarking process?

A. See Question 20.

77. What would HCHC like the logo to communicate? Please share 5 descriptive keywords that you desire your logo to communicate about HCHC?

A. The Commission anticipates working with the vendor to develop this.

78. Would HCHC desire the selected vendor to not only redesign the logo but offer additional branding services to redesign many of the downloadable resources such as the "Multifamily Communities, Senior Communities"?

A. No.

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79. Is HCHC open to the opportunity of bringing some of the PDF resources online in a digital format so that they can be easily updated in one location?

A. This may be proposed by vendors.

80. Will this website be hosted in house or on an external server?

A. The Commission anticipates hosting on an external server. See Question 7.

81. Does the current Howard County website have a Content Management System?

A. Yes.

82. Is it the desire of the Howard County Housing Commission to have a Content Management System (CMS) so that the team can easily update and manage the website?

A. Yes.

83. Do you desire to have any form of payment collection in the form of but not limited to: Fees, Dues, Subscriptions?

A. No.

84. If you could pick any website to give the look and feel of the HCHC what would it be?

A. See the example URLs provided in Question 139.

85. What third party applications (API's) would need to be integrated into your website?

A. None at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

86. Is there a preference for any particular coding language that HCHC would like to stay with?

A. See Question 4.

87. Is there a need or a desire for a staff/community portal?

A. Not at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

88. Is there a need for landlords portal of any type?

A. Not at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

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89. Will the Board of Directors need a place to load documents only available to them or to share publically to the community?

A. Yes, there will be a public page for board information, meeting dates, agendas, minutes, etc.

90. Will this website be hosted as a part of Howard County's website (as it currently is) or does HCHC desire it be hosted separately from HCHC?

A. This website will be hosted separately from Howard County's website.

91. Does the HCHC website need to communicate with the main Howard County website for any purpose?

A. No.

92. Are there any databases or third party vendors that need to be integrated into the site?

A. No.

93. Do you have a preferred Content Management System (CMS)?

A. See Question 5.

94. If you were to switch content management systems would you look to the selected firm to assist with recommended hosting providers. Or does HCHC currently have an established provider?

A. Yes, the vendor should be prepared to make recommendations. No, the Commission does not have an established provider.

95. Do you currently have a plan to transfer old content to the new server/website

A. No. The Commission anticipates working with the vendor to develop this.

96. Once the HCHC has a new website how do you plan to get the word out to the community?

A. A notice will be posted at the location of the Commission's existing website and on social media.

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97. Does HCHC have a Search Engine Optimization, and or an Online Marketing plan to bring awareness to the website?

A. No.

98. Does HCHC currently have an email list or newsletter that is currently sent out? If not does HCHC plan to use email marketing?

A. No. Possibly, but those services are not sought under this RFP.

99. Are there any current marketing plans the HCHC is currently running?

A. None that relate to the services sought under this RFP.

100. What was the best marketing plan the HCHC has done throughout its history?

A. A strong example is Commission's participation in marketing the housing fair and expo referenced in Question 48.

101. How are other County's marketing themselves?

A. That is not known to the Commission.

102. Are there other counties that HCHC admires or looks at to say "these counties are doing X,Y,Z the right way"?

A. See example URLs in Question 139.

103. Would HCHC also like to include direction/designs for branding your social media presence?

A. No.

104. How much traffic does the current Howard County website get per month?

A. This is not known to the Commission. The Howard County Department of Technology and Communication Services is responsible for the website and may be able to provide an answer.

105. How much traffic does the current HCHC website get per month?

A. As the Commission's current website is nested within the County's, see Question 104.

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106. How much traffic does the HCHC expect to get to the website once the new website has been developed?

A. This is not known to the Commission at this time.

107. Will Howard County make the analytics to the current site available to the firm so a solid content strategy can be developed?

A. If necessary, the Commission can seek to arrange this information through the Howard County Department of Technology and Communication Services after award is made.

108. How long has Google Analytics been tracking data on the Howard County website?

A. This is not known to the Commission at this time.

109. Is Howard County open to sharing the data from Google Analytics so that as apart of our proposal we can present a custom approach to the development of HCHC's website?

A. No.

110. Does HCHC have a current content strategy?

A. No.

111. Has HCHC ever done a content strategy before?

A. No.

112. If you were limited to 5 pages on your site what would your top 5 pages be?

A. The 5 pages listed under the "Housing Commission" heading in the navigation pane.

113. Do you plan to blog?

A. No.

114. Will the project manager serve as the main content gatherer?

A. This will be determined after award. Commission personnel, however, will be responsible for gathering content.

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115. Is the content for the new website already written and approved?

A. Yes and future content will be. The Commission anticipates migrating content on its existing website to the new website.

116. How many pages do you expect the HCHC website to have?

A. An exact number is not known at this time. For guidance, visit the Commission's current site as it contains a relatively similar level of pages and content that we expect to see at launch.

117. Is there a current community calendar that needs to be synced with the website?

A. No.

118. Do you have an online/digital event registration system in place?

A. No.

119. What top 3 features does your website have to have in order to be a success?

A. See example URLs in Question 139.

120. Can users currently download applications to any of the HCHC programs?

A. Applications are made available for download in PDF format.

121. Are users able to fill out sign or submit applications electronically?

A. No.

122. Is it HCHC's desire to have a custom landing page for each property that leads to the physical website of each property as well as the associated Property Manager?

A. No.

123. Does HCHC desire to create a portal specifically for Landlords and Owners of Howard County?

A. Not at launch. The Commission may revisit this topic in the future.

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124. Is HCHC open to a private beta launch and the incremental launching other elements of the website?

A. Yes.

125. After launch is there a plan in place for ongoing maintenance?

A. The Commission will be primarily be responsible for ongoing maintenance. External assistance will be obtained on an as-needed basis.

126. What would HCHC consider as a successful website?

A. A website that is easily-navigable and well-presented for its visitors.

127. Does HCHC have any measurable goals to measure the success of the website after launch: Example: we want to grow our site visitors by 20%

A. No.

128. Does HCHC completed a Customer Persona?

A. No.

129. What is the average income of your site visitors?

A. This is not known to the Commission.

130. What is the average age of your site visitors?

A. This is not known to the Commission.

131. What is the age of your ideal visitor?

A. The Commission has not determined this.

132. How do visitors find out about HCHC and the programs HCHC offers?

A. Visitors to the current website have access to the content thereon that describes the Commission and its programs. Social media also relays this information.

133. Is this project funded by a grant?

A. No.

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134. What has HCHC invested or set aside for the development of this project?

A. The Commission has not specified an investment or set-aside for this project.

135. Has it been budgeted for the fiscal year?

A. Please be advised that funding is available.

136. When do you expect to launch this project? Are there any hard deadlines, events or special dates that determine the launch date of the project?

A. See Question 3.

137. Does HCHC desire to have a Pricing Proposal submitted separately from the general project proposal?

A. No.

138. Will the proposal price be locked once submitted? If problems or new discoveries arise during the project will you allow adjustments to be made in the proposal?

A. Yes, price will be locked. The Commission may consider requests for adjustments at its sole discretion.

139. Can the Commission provide the URLs of three websites to serve as examples of what the Commission generally desires for its website?

A. <http://www.hacfrederick.org>; <http://www.arha.us>; <http://www.hcaac.org>

140. Must the new website be 508-compliant?

A. Yes and it must otherwise comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

141. How many webpages does the Commission's current website have?

A. Approximately 16.

142. How many templates does the Commission envision using for its new website?

A. The Commission envisions 5 – 10 templates.

143. How many forms are on the Commission's current website?

A. Seven. All forms are in PDF format.